I. *Some obſervations on Coral, large Oyſters, Rubies, the growing of a ſort of* Ficus Indica, *the Gods of the* Ceylaneſe, &c. *made in* Ceilan, *by Mr* Strachan.

THere is great quantity of a kind of white Coral upon the ſhore betwixt *Gale* and *Mature*, and many other Coaſts in the *Indies*, of which the *Hollanders* cauſe Lime to be burnt for building of Houſes, and the Walls of the Fortifications. There are great Banks of the ſaid Coral, it is porous, neither ſo firm and ſmooth as the upright, which grows in little Branches, and when they are come to the full growth, there grows other betwixt theſe, and then upon theſe grows others, until it is become like a Rock for thickneſs; theſe Branches are not ſofter when they are young, than when they are ripe, yet I have obſerved a ſlime upon them always when they are under water, which I ſuppoſe is the ſubſtance which petrifies, I have ſeen three Leagues from *Batavia*, upon that Iſland, where the *Hollanders* turn up the keel of the Ships to dreſs and mend them, Oyſters of a foot Diameter, the Shell of one of theſe did grow until it was 3 foot of Diameter broad and a foot thick, after the Fleſh was putrified, upon theſe Shells lying only 3 or 4 foot under water, I alſo always did find a ſlime. Upon the Coaſt betwixt *Galè* and *Gindere* lies always *Os Sepiæ*, and in the River at *Catoene* there are found Rubies, and if one is deſirous, and ſeek among the Sand in the Water, he will find above a drop weight of Rubies in the ſpace of one hour, but they are very ſmall, for 20 of them will ſcarcely weigh a grain weight, ſo that it is not worth a mans while.

Upon the Sea Coaſt upon the Sand do lye a kind of little Cockles of the bigneſs of Crabs Eyes or *Oculi Cancrorum*, there is no cavity within, if beat in Powder they have the ſame effect

The Royal Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve, and extend access to *Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)*. www.jstor.org

effect as *Teſtaceous* Powders, and are uſed inſtead of *Oculi Cancrorum.*

There are ſeveral Trees, one of which will be above 6 fathom high, whoſe Root (I may ſay) grows above ground, after the following manner, when the Twig is about one half foot high above Ground, there grows out of the middle of the ſtem a little knot which grows downward, making an angle with the ſtem of 30 Degrees or thereabout until it touch the Ground, then it fixes in the Ground, ſending forth ſmall Sprigs, which before it touched the Ground had neither Branch nor Leaves, but all over green even like a ſhoot. While this ſhoot grows and the Stem grows higher, it ſtill ſhoots forth other ſhoots, which always comes out of the middle of the Tree or Trunk; thus it continues ſhooting forth theſe ſhoots, until the Tree be at his full growth, and the higher the Trees grow, the knots and the ſhoots are the thicker and longer, ſo that one of the ſhoots which grows laſt, will be a foot thick of Diameter, and 3 fathom long.

Now the Flower which is called *Happumal* grows upon a Tree that grows after this manner, and grows only two fathom high, if they be planted round about an Orchard they are an excellent Hedge, for the Leaves are thorny and full of pricks, when the Flower decays it carries a Fruit like a Pine-apple, but is for no uſe.

Some Naturaliſts affirm all Plants to have a Heart, or ſomething analogous to it; it would be worthy the enquiry in what place the Heart of theſe kind of Trees is, as alſo the Palmito and Coco-tree.

It is very difficult to know which of theſe two have a greater reſpect given to them, the *Budun* or *Sakradewendra.*

Sakradewendra commands and governs all the reſt of the Gods, and did hear formerly the Prayers that were offered up to him from diſtreſſed People here upon Earth, and did grant their requeſt, but now the Golden Chair whereupon he uſed to ſit is gone, and the Prayers which are offer'd up to him now have no effect, becauſe the foot of that Chair was

made

made of a kind of Wax, which would turn ſoft by the Prayers and Tears of the Supplicators, and would ſink downward, by which means the *Sakradewendra* would look down and take notice of the Prayer of the Supplicant and grant their requeſt.

This Chair being of fine Gold was deſtributed among the poor, which is the cauſe wherefore he does not now perceive or know when any man makes Supplication to him, therefore there are but few People that has any benefit of the Prayers and Tears which they offer to him.

He can indeed look far when he turns his Eyes towards any place, for his Forehead reſembles the Peacocks Tayl, it is ſo full of Eyes, and ſo ſometimes it chances that he looks down and takes notice of men, but this is but ſeldom, therefore there is a neceſſity for one to pacify theſe wicked Spirits which trouble us here on Earth. I could never underſtand of them how long this *Dewendra* had been a God, or how long he would Reign, for none trouble their Heads to regard him any more.

The *Budun* whereof the *Banapots* (or their Bibles, if I may call them ſo) makes great mention, has had the Life of all the Species of living Creatures that are in the World, having been firſt an Inſect, after his Death his Soul was regenerated into a Mouſe, after that an Ox, then a Monkey, and ſo forth, then a Man, and ſtill by his good Life and Merits was ſtill born in a better condition until, he is become the ſupreme of all the Gods.

Of the *Buduns* there has been 3, every one of theſe Reigns has been counted after this manner, there is a great Hill about half a mile of perpendicular height, and about ſix miles in circumference, from the Hill a certain Bird comes once in a thouſand year, and takes one grain to a certain place, and continues every thouſand years once, until he has removed that Hill to another place.